

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

(before reaching out to Val for an INTERVIEW or as a SPEAKER)

1. DO YOUR HOMEWORK / RESEARCH:

There are over countless interviews Val has done. Links for all can be found on her website, including articles, Tedx talks, podcast and write ups – all available on google.

“Please do not reach out to me asking for an interview of questions I have already answered. It takes A LOT of effort on my part to be responding to things already been covered before. Such a repetition isn’t good my own mental health EVEN if I am over many of the issues.”

2. CONSIDER PAYING VAL FOR AN INTERVIEW OR AS A SPEAKER:

Would you do something for free? Or would a doctor/counsellor give you advice and time for free? Then why do you expect me to solve your problems, give tips and solutions, read through a list of queries for free?

“All of this does take up my artist time. It might seem like something insignificant – maybe if one person is doing this with me. BUT I have emails, inboxes and WhatsApp messages of individuals reaching out all the time. How can I possibly give out such time to anyone for free? On top of it all, I have had so many interviewers misquote me, get my facts and spelling wrong!”

3. WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE FOR VAL WHEN ASKED FOR INTERVIEWS?

I have to ‘switch’ into an interview mode where sometimes I can forget things owing to a seizure. Seizures HURT! They take away days of my time, memory and functionality.

I have deadlines to meet which I might then lose out on. It is a complete loss for me where as for others I am merely a number of article, likes, comment for their space. If I lose such time I cannot paint and do what I do in order to live. I too have bills to pay. I have to prepare my mind for this, upon it getting triggered I have to then work towards balancing it. You might be done with the interview, but my reality has been shaken again.

4. WHY IS VAL DIFFERENT THAN OTHER SPEAKERS / INTERVIEWS YOU INVITE?

Is that not obvious? Other speakers more often are employed and their roles are paid for. They already have legal rights, financial and social advantages compared to Val. Also, you would not be inviting Val unless you already thought that what she has to offer is significant.

“Every time I travel, I fear I would be stopped on the grounds that someone will find out about my label and use it against me. I do not have a support person to travel with me and the effort I need to make with myself is very invisible. It becomes exhausting to hold my space throughout my travel. From planning my bladder control, my food habits, my sleep cycle getting topsy-turvy –in my case when these get chaotic I do experience a seizure. I do live without medications and so my expertise and time in the area has to be respected. Why wouldn’t others recognize that, however they would if I had the title of a monk? This is discrimination.”

5. WHAT IF YOU CAN’T PAY?

Provide Val with marketing support, promotional help for free, arrange her interview where her sales of her books / art is guaranteed or even offer to purchase her groceries, art supplies, or give her Swiggy food coupons. This would take care of her basics living cost.

“I live alone. My parents, family and friends who live over distances in different cities cannot provide the kind of support I would need. I simply have to rely on myself when I have my breakdowns while continuing to engage in work and household chores. My cats are my only source of help. And if I can’t make the money to take care of them, then what’s the point?”

Over countless interviews I have done since 2004, I have not got a single direct ‘buyer’. It’s highly stigmatizing when interviewers tell me ‘free publicity for my cause’. My clientele has been from my own personal network.”

“We’re all born to bring about a change,
so let’s not do things just because they need to get done.
Just because you need to fit in.
We can change the system together - how people treat each other -
if you are willing to” - Val